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C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 000619

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/08/2018
TAGS: [PREL](#) [AR](#)
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR MEETS WITH ARGENTINE CONGRESSIONAL
INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE HEAD

REF: BUENOS AIRES 589

Classified By: Ambassador Wayne for reasons 1.4 (b) & (d).

¶1. (SBU) Summary: The Ambassador met May 7 with Chairman of Argentina's Joint Congressional Committee for the Oversight of Intelligence Activities and Organizations Senator Marcelo Fuentes. Fuentes has known former president Nestor Kirchner for a long time; they both studied at law in La Plata and in August 2002 Kirchner asked Fuentes to travel to Buenos Aires to help with his presidential campaign. During the meeting, Ambassador Wayne encouraged exchanges between the U.S. and Argentine legislatures. Fuentes welcomed the opportunity and also broached expanding ties between Argentina provinces and U.S. states. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) Ambassador met May 7 with Senator Marcelo Fuentes, Chairman of the Joint Committee for the Oversight of Intelligence Activities and Organizations. Ambassador congratulated Fuentes on his post and emphasized its importance. (Note: Fuentes assumed the post from Deputy Stella Maris Cordoba in December 2007. The committee is composed of 7 senators and 7 deputies and alternates leadership every year between the two congressional chambers.) Ambassador Wayne conveyed our desire to explore possibilities for exchanges between U.S. and Argentine legislatures. He mentioned CODEL Reyes's November 2007 visit to Argentina had produced good conversations with Argentine counterparts. The Ambassador noted that we have a long history of intelligence oversight. Fuentes agreed that collaborating on issues of security and on the bilateral fight against terrorism were important. He said that cooperation and collaboration were the best ways to exchange ideas in a democratic context.

¶3. (SBU) Fuentes mentioned that he had spoken with Argentine Ambassador to the U.S. Hector Timerman, who was interested in fomenting relationships between U.S. states and Argentine provinces (see refTel). Fuentes cited the case of Brazilian governor of Bahia Jaques Wagner and Argentine governor of Tucuman Jose Alperovich. He noted that Bahia confronts some of the same health care issues as Tucuman (e.g., high rates of infant mortality). In 2003, Tucuman's public health department traveled to Bahia to talk about their health policies. Additionally, Fuentes mentioned that Alperovich and Wagner are both the first Jewish governors in their respective countries, which helped create an instant bond between them. Fuentes said that there is a Patagonia-Amazonia alliance focused on preserving the environment. The Ambassador mentioned Senator Romero's Committee on U.S.-Argentine friendship as an example of existing cooperation.

Comment

¶4. (C) Fuentes has been a friend of the Kirchners since their days in La Plata, but has maintained a low-profile in

Buenos Aires. In his new position as Chairman of the Joint Committee for the Oversight of Intelligence Activities and Organizations, he seems interested in exchanges between U.S. and Argentine legislatures. He also seems to have a connection to U.S. Ambassador Timmerman, who has a direct line to President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner. He gave the Ambassador a copy of a book about the generation of student leaders and activists that came of age in the 1970s with the Kirchners. The book is sub-titled "From La Plata (where the Kirchners and Fuentes attended university) to the Casa Rosada." End comment.

Bio Note

15. (U) Senator Marcelo Jorge Fuentes was born on October 6, 1948 in La Plata, Buenos Aires Province. He is married and has a son and a daughter. He was elected as a Senator from Neuquen in 2007. He has chaired the permanent Joint Committee for the Oversight of Intelligence Activities and Organizations since December 2007. He is also a member of the National Council of Magistrates, representing the governing party's senators. Prior to this position he served as Under Secretary for Institutional Relations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2003-07).

16. (U) Fuentes is a personal friend of former President Kirchner; they both graduated from University of La Plata's law school in the 1970s. Although Fuentes was active in the Peronist youth when he was a university student, he has not participated actively in domestic politics, and his nomination to the Senate was initially opposed by Peronist activists in Neuquen. His father was a prominent lawyer who

served as member of the first provincial supreme court after Neuquen became a province in 1955. Fuentes loves jazz music.

WAYNE